

When My Mind is Renewed, Part 3 - Romans 12:19-21 – April 7th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part three of a series I've titled; "When My Mind is Renewed."
- As we complete this amazing chapter, it's vital we understand how impossible it is for us to heed what we read in these remaining verses.
- In other words, absent a renewed mind and a transformed life, we have no hope of ever experiencing what Paul writes here in this chapter.

- This of course presupposes that all of us actually want that which this chapter says we can have, and I can't imagine anyone who wouldn't.
- Let's be honest, who of us wouldn't want to be sincere, good, devoted, loving, honoring, full of zeal, joyful, hopeful, patient, and hospitable?
- By the way, everything I just listed, a total of ten, only goes up to verse fifteen, and as such, it gets even better with what's in verse sixteen.

1. I'll live in harmony with others (Verse 16)

- Paul says we're to live in harmony with each other, and not be proud and conceited, but willing to associate with those in low positions.

2. I'll do what's right by others (Verse 17)

- v17 Paul writes how that we're not to repay anyone with evil when we've been the recipients of evil, but to do what's right by everybody.

3. I'll live at peace with others (Verse 18)

- v18 He says that, if it is possible, and as far as it depends on us, we are to live at peace with everyone, in as much as we are able to do so.

4. I'll be kind to others (Verses 19-20)

(19) Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (20) On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

- v19 Paul says not to take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath, then quotes Deut. 32:35; It is mine to avenge and repay says the Lord.
- v20 Instead, we're to give food or drink to our enemy if he's hungry or thirsty because by doing this we heap burning coals on their head.
- I have to confess that early on in my Christian walk, I used to think that this heaping burning coals on someone's head would burn them.

Proverbs 25:21-22 NIV If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. (22) In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

- The problem with that way of thinking is, the Lord is certainly not going to reward me for burning my enemy by heaping coals on his head.
- It's for this reason that one has to conclude that heaping burning coals on someone's head must be an act of kindness, and not of revenge.
- I would suggest that this was not only an act of kindness it was in fact that which would overcome evil, as we'll see next in the last verse.

As one commentator writes, "Is the heaping coals of fire on his head something good in the eyes of our enemy or is it something bad? It most likely refers to a "burning conviction" that our kindness places on our enemy. Or, some think it refers to the practice of lending coals from a fire to help a neighbor, start their own - an act of kindness that would be appreciated."

5. I'll overcome evil towards others (Verse 21)

(21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- v21 Paul writes how that we're not to be overcome by evil, then explains how it's even possible saying instead to overcome evil with good.
- Sadly, many a Christian has sought to overcome evil with more evil, and in so doing, has in effect, been consumed and overcome by evil.
- Again, this is why a new way of thinking, vis-à-vis the renewed mind, and transformed life that comes packaged with it, is an absolute must.

Charles Spurgeon - "It is recorded of a Chinese emperor that, on being informed that his enemies had raised an insurrection in one of his distant provinces, said to his officers, 'Come, follow me: and we will quickly destroy them.' He marched forward and the rebels submitted upon his approach. All now thought that he would take the most signal revenge, but were surprised to see the captain treated with mildness and humanity. 'How!' cried the first minister, 'is this the manner in which you fulfill your promise? Your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed; and behold! You have pardoned them all, and even caressed some of them.' 'I promised,' replied the emperor with a generous air, 'to destroy my enemies. I have fulfilled my word, for see, they are enemies no longer: I have made friends of them.' This is a fit example for Christians." Spurgeon then goes on to write of a poetic verse, which says, "Forget not thou hast often sinned - and sinful yet must be - deal gently with the erring one - as God has dealt with thee."

- In closing I'll start with the why, which for the benefit of those who weren't with us for that series, is a must for anything to change in my life.
- The reason why I won't take matters into my own hands in order to mete out my revenge is because I can overcome the evil with the good.
- Furthermore, the same reason why I, instead, will heap burning coals on their head as an act of kindness is that I make an enemy a friend.